

Tennessee Technological University
Policy No. 1103



Effective Date: Jan. 1, 2019

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Policy Name: University Social Media

I. Purpose

Tennessee Tech encourages the use of social media to connect with students, employees, alumni, and friends of the university. Social media sites provide communication channels that encourage discussions about university events, issues, accolades, organizations, and people.

II. Review

This policy will be reviewed every four years or whenever circumstances require review, whichever is earlier, by the Chief Communication Officer, with recommendations for revision presented to the Administrative Council and University Assembly.

III. Scope

This policy is applicable to all social media accounts created to represent the university and its component units (such as colleges, offices, departments, and programs). Student groups are exempt from this policy. University employees acting in an individual capacity are not governed by this policy, but should exercise caution to communicate clearly that the opinions expressed on their personal accounts are solely theirs and do not necessarily reflect the positions of Tennessee Tech.

IV. Definition(s)

- A.** “Social Media” – A software system or service provided via the internet used to communicate and share information between people through interactions with video, audio, text, or multimedia. Examples include, but are not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube, Tumblr, LinkedIn, Snapchat, or other similar services.
- B.** “Tennessee Tech Social Media Accounts” – Any Social Media account that represents the university and its units.
- C.** “Tennessee Tech Unit” – Components of Tennessee Tech, including, but not limited to, divisions, colleges, centers, departments, programs, and offices.
- D.** “Tennessee Tech Employees” – For the purpose of this policy, university employees are non-student employees of the university, including both part-time and full-time employees.

V. Policy

- A.** All Tennessee Tech Social Media Accounts are considered property of the university.
- B.** All Tennessee Tech Social Media Accounts must comply with:
 - 1.** Tennessee and federal laws and regulations, and Tennessee Tech policies; and
 - 2.** Any applicable Tennessee Tech branding standards published in the Tennessee Tech Marketing Toolkit.
- C.** Only public information may be posted on Tennessee Tech Social Media Accounts. Tennessee Tech Social Media Accounts must not contain confidential information as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Regulations, as applicable. Any confidential information posted on a Tennessee Tech Social Media Account must be removed by the account's administrator as soon as practically possible upon discovery.
- D.** While Tennessee Tech is committed to fostering an educational environment that allows freedoms of speech, expression, and assembly in accordance with the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, Tennessee Tech will not tolerate any activity or posting on a Tennessee Tech Social Media Account that is unlawful, defamatory, or obscene (as defined by Tennessee and federal law); does not support the university's mission; or is inconsistent with the values and traditions of Tennessee Tech. Tennessee Tech reserves the right to remove any such posting without notice and to refer the author and matter to the appropriate university manager for possible discipline under Tennessee Technological University Policy No. 650, "Disciplinary Action."
- E.** All Tennessee Tech Social Media Accounts must respect intellectual property rights, federal copyright law, and university policies regarding such.
- F.** Tennessee Tech Employees using a personal social media account as part of their official duties, or presenting themselves as a university representative speaking in an official capacity, must comply with applicable university policies governing employee behavior and acceptable use of electronic and informational resources.

VI. Social Media Account Creation & Administrative Access

- A.** All Tennessee Tech Social Media Accounts must be created by the Office of

Communications & Marketing, who will then grant appropriate administrative access to the requested account to the following:

1. The Office of Communications & Marketing;
 2. Tennessee Tech Employees from the requesting Tennessee Tech Unit;
 3. Vice President of division containing the requesting Tennessee Tech Unit; and
 4. College deans of the requesting academic units within their college.
- B.** Tennessee Tech Social Media Accounts must have a minimum of two employees of the requesting Tennessee Tech Unit with administrative rights to the account to ensure the site is consistently managed. At least one of the account administrators must be a permanent full-time Tennessee Tech Employee at the director level or higher.
- C.** All Tennessee Tech Social Media Accounts in existence prior to the effective date of this policy must be brought into compliance with all administrative access requirements spelled out above.
- D.** Tennessee Tech Employees with administrative rights to a Tennessee Tech Social Media Account are responsible for any content they post to the account. All account administrators will receive and must acknowledge their reading of the [“Tennessee Tech Guidelines for Social Media Participation”](#) from the Office of Communications & Marketing.

VII. Interpretation

The Chief Communication Officer or his/her designee has the final authority to interpret the terms of this policy.

VIII. Citation of Authority for Policy

T.C.A. § 49-8-203(a)(1)(E)

Approved by:

Administrative Council:

University Assembly:

Title: Tennessee Tech Guidelines for Social Media Participation**Tennessee Tech Guidelines for Social Media Participation**

These guidelines apply to Tennessee Tech employees who create or contribute to university social media accounts. Anyone who participates in social media on behalf of the university should understand and follow these guidelines.

Purpose

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube have increasingly become an essential part of the way individuals, institutions and communities connect and communicate. For institutions like Tennessee Tech, social media provides an opportunity to engage with current students, prospective students and alumni.

The university's social media presence is designed to provide broad-based information about the university by:

- Extending the university's reach and influence online by connecting and building relationships with key audiences, such as prospective students, current students, parents, alumni and community members
- Providing additional opportunities for these key audiences to communicate and interact with the university
- Providing additional channels for audiences to receive and share official university information

These guidelines will help individual units in their planning and deployment of a social media presence.

Getting started

The Tennessee Tech Office of Communications & Marketing is responsible for the university's official social media presence but encourages other departments and units to have a presence of their own in the social media sphere.

Units within the university interested in joining a social network should contact Communications & Marketing and speak with the social media coordinator who will gather needed information and create the account. Then, the social media coordinator will grant account access to appropriate parties within the unit, including at least one full-time university employee and at least one director-level employee.

To request a page be created, email socialmedia@tntech.edu.

Page and handle names:

- Page, group or account names on social media platforms should include the unit or department name followed by "at Tennessee Tech." ex: School of

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Music at Tennessee Tech, Mechanical Engineering at Tennessee Tech, Center for Career Development at Tennessee Tech.

- Handles for social media accounts should list TNTech first, followed by the unit or department name. Unit and department names may be abbreviated as needed. ex: @TNTechMusic, @TNTechMechEng, @TNTechCareer
- Do not use TTU in page names, handles or hashtags. Use TNTech when an abbreviation for the university name is needed.

Have a plan:

Before you get started in social media, think about it from a marketing standpoint. Ask yourself:

- Who is my audience? Current students? Prospective students? Someone else? Each audience has different interests and responds to different messages and different communications approaches.
- What do I want to accomplish with this audience? How will social media help me reach these goals?
- How do I want my audience to respond? What is the ultimate goal of using social media? Develop the right metrics to measure how well you are meeting your goals.

Social media should be worked into your overall communication plan. Social media is not a stand-alone, create-and-forget solution to your communications and marketing challenges and may not be a replacement for a university website or traditional viewbook.

Finding the platform that fits

Campus units should only establish accounts they are able to manage regularly and that reach their intended audiences.

Consider your audience and what platforms they are using on social media to select the types of accounts that will work best for reaching your target audience. Communications & Marketing is available to discuss options and to identify and plan for effective use of social media for the campus community by email at socialmedia@tntech.edu.

It is against university policy to create an account without first consulting with Office of Communications & Marketing staff. However, if your account existed prior to this policy or if you were unaware of the policy at the time the account was created, contact the office so that they can help you promote it and add it to the university's social media directory.

Page posting and maintenance

Social media is a fast and open medium. Be prepared for that. By creating an account, you are agreeing to not only provide content for the account's audience, but also to engage with that audience if prompted. That means responding to questions, comments and misunderstandings that may result from your content.

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Have an understanding within your office of who will be responsible for posting content as well as monitoring and responding to messages and comments on your accounts.

Represent your university

Social media accounts that represent Tech should not represent the interests of any other university. This includes account visuals, posted copy and images.

To best engage our students and community, we suggest adopting a tone that fits with the adjectives:

- Friendly
- Intelligent
- goal-driven
- innovative
- supportive
- humble
- collaborative
- committed

When crafting content for your pages, consider the university brand story, describing Tech in terms of:

- Genuine Community
- Transformative Experiences
- Your Opportunity

Follow all brand guidelines when representing the university, respect intellectual property laws, be respectful of others and verify all information is accurate before posting. If you make a mistake, acknowledge and correct it as quickly as possible. Any statements should be accurate and not misleading.

If you see misrepresentations made about the university on social media, you may point them out, but always do so with respect and with the facts.

Don't be afraid to be yourself, but do so respectfully. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.) but also proper consideration for privacy and topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory – such as politics or religion.

Do not post any threatening or obscene content. Do not share confidential information about the university, its staff or students.

Engage with your audience

Keep in mind that the nature of social media is two-way communication that strives to create a sense of community and engagement.

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It is possible, even likely, that your accounts will get questions or comments not related to you or that apply to another office or department. Be helpful in responding to messages and comments. Stick to your area of expertise, but direct those who reach out to you to the proper office for assistance, providing contact information for the office or individual on campus who can help.

When creating content, strive to create dialogue by giving people something to respond to or act on. Keep in mind that we are contributing to the larger body of content and conversations that happen around the clock on social media, so add value and unique perspective when possible.

Thank people for their input and feedback, even negative feedback can be valuable.

Managing your page

Be prepared for staff changes. At least one full-time university employee and at least one director-level employee should have access to manage a given social media account at all times. This allows for easy changes during staff changes or vacations. If an account manager leaves the university, the individual unit is responsible for the transfer of access to another appropriate employee. Any changes in access should be reported to the Office of Communications & Marketing immediately.

Student access to university social media accounts must be pre-approved by a director-level employee. Offices allowing students to manage their accounts take responsibility for all content posted on their behalf. If students are granted page admin access, the Office of Communications & Marketing must be notified so that they may be added to the social media manager directory.

A Tennessee Tech social media account may only “follow” or “like” other university social media accounts or accounts of organizations that have a close, direct partnership with the university. Do not engage in any personal activity from university accounts or give the perception of university endorsement of individuals or companies via university social media accounts.

Use your best judgment; if someone posts something inflammatory, threatening, or otherwise seriously concerning, notify the proper authorities on campus. Take screenshots before deleting anything to forward to authorities and for your own records.

If you realize that social media is not meeting your needs or the needs of your audience or public, close the account rather than leave it inactive.

Content for social media posts

Social media accounts die if they are not fed regularly. This means providing frequent updates to your social media account(s). Plan ahead by creating a calendar for what you would like to share when.

The Office of Communications and Marketing reserves the right to disable or temporarily deactivate university social media accounts that have no posts or activity for more than six months. Before deactivating any page, the Office of Communications and Marketing will work with units to come up with ways to increase activity and engagement.

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Considering using resources and templates for social media graphics provided in the Office of Communications & Marketing's marketing toolkit. Profile image templates and suggested cover images can also be found there.

Follow all university privacy, computing and web policies. Do not post confidential or proprietary information about the university, students, prospective students, faculty, staff, alumni, business partners, research partners, or others. Employees using social media on behalf of the university still must follow all applicable federal requirements such as FERPA and HIPAA, as well as NCAA regulations. Adhere to all applicable university privacy and confidentiality policies. Employees who share confidential information do so at the risk of disciplinary action or termination.

Consider whether the content you post would be acceptable for face-to-face conversation or over the telephone. If not, it should not be posted on social media. Ask yourself, would I want to see this published in the newspaper or posted on a billboard tomorrow or 10 years from now?

Respect copyright laws. It is critical that you show proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others. Use caution when pulling images from web sources to use on social media. Consider using the university stock photo site to find images to include with posts. Site administrators are responsible for ensuring that social media content posted on the site is not infringing on the intellectual property rights of others.

Do not be the first to announce university or departmental news on a social media site unless pre-approved by the Office of Communications & Marketing. Do not share independent emergency alerts or news to university accounts, leave those to be handled by the Office of Communications & Marketing. Refer any inquiries received via social media from news organizations or affiliates to the Office of Communications & Marketing.

Connect

Tag other university accounts in your posts, when it makes sense, to help build a more connected university community. Consider using hashtags used by the main university accounts.

Hashtags add a connected element to social media posts. Because these tags become part of the university's extended brand, the Office of Communications & Marketing requires any individual or department creating a new hashtag that aligns with the university to get approval before using the tag. Email hashtag suggestions to socialmedia@tntech.edu at least one week prior to any intended use.

Campus social media managers gather monthly to share ideas, collaborate and talk about current topics related to social media. These monthly meetings are open to all interested individuals on campus involved in social media. Meeting dates and locations are advertised in Tech Times. These meetings offer a friendly environment for asking questions and learning new things about social media. If you manage a campus social media account, consider attending.

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The Office of Communications & Marketing produces a monthly email newsletter focused on social media. This newsletter includes news about social media platforms and helpful tips. All university social media page managers should subscribe to this newsletter. To be added to the distribution list, email socialmedia@tntech.edu

Community Standards for those engaging with university posts

We respect the opinions of our community and encourage commenting and community discussion, but ask that comments on university social media content stick to appropriate and respectful language. We will not tolerate personal attacks or inappropriate language. The Office of Communications and Marketing reserves the right to delete excessive postings to improve the overall community experience. Posts advertising commercial products, containing inaccuracies or that violate terms of use of individual platforms may also be removed.

Use of university logo on social media

The Tennessee Tech logo is trademarked, and the Office of Marketing & Communications must approve use. The logo cannot be altered and must be used in compliance with the guidelines of the Office of Marketing & Communications.

The name or logo should not be used to promote or endorse any activity, event, product, cause, political party or political candidate, without approval from the Office of Marketing & Communications.

The Office of Communications & Marketing reserves the right to report or delete any pages using the Tennessee Tech logo or name outside of approved uses.

Profile photos for university social media accounts should match the template provided in the Office of Communications & Marketing's marketing toolkit with the university logo prominently displayed and college, department or unit name listed below the logo.